



## Health and Human Services **MEDIA RELEASE**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 25, 2015

# **Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County addresses County Health Ranking**

*2015 Report reinforces the benefits of expanding community collaboration*

SARASOTA COUNTY— The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) recognizes the value of measuring health outcomes using a variety of data tools. Today, Sarasota County Health and Human Services officials acknowledged the 2015 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool, released by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This study is the sixth in a series of annual reports that highlights the many community factors that influence health and measures progress using established data sources, many of which are available from the Department at [www.floridacharts.com](http://www.floridacharts.com).

“We are pleased with the modest gains that our county has made in the rankings, and we continuously strive to identify new opportunities to expand the scope of collaborations to foster healthy environments and healthy lifestyles,” said DOH-Sarasota Health Officer/Administrator Chuck Henry, who also serves as the director for Sarasota County Health and Human Services.

These rankings, which address physical environments, social and economic factors, health behaviors, and access to clinical care, are a snapshot of the health of counties across the nation. The report reinforces the benefit of community collaborations since health and well-being is not the result of one single effort but rather the dynamic achieved through the collective and ongoing efforts of many community partners. Through collaboration with local governments, non-profit organizations, health care facilities, business groups, schools, faith-based organizations and many other stakeholders, the department works to improve the health of all people in Sarasota County.

Sarasota County’s [Community Health Improvement Plan](#) addresses specific opportunities for improved health that have been identified by the community. The department has partnered with many stakeholders to implement the CHIP and collaborates regularly to track progress. Local health officials are leading an effort to update the county’s Community Health Assessment through resident surveys in the coming months as yet another tool to gauge the health of our community. That report will support the updating of Sarasota County’s Community Health Improvement Plan.



### **MEDIA NOTES:**

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“Through a unique collaboration between DOH-Sarasota and Sarasota County government, the public health implications relating to our built environment are being considered during the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan Update,” said Tom Polk, director of Planning and Development Services. “Health is an all-encompassing outcome, so this collaboration is essential in our long-term planning process that establishes a policy framework to improve quality of life in Sarasota County.”

“Speaking for my generation who are tomorrow’s leaders, organizations such as Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) Clubs do make a difference. We are passionate about our role in helping to counteract the tactics of ‘Big Tobacco’ to get youth hooked on a wide range of tobacco products that appeal to us because of their visibility, cool wrappers, candy flavors and cheap pricing,” said President of the Sarasota County SWAT Leadership group and member of the statewide SWAT Youth Advocacy Board Evianna Gianoplus. “We serve as advocates for all youth by using ‘best practices’ to bring tobacco point-of-sale advertising and candy flavored tobacco to forefront. The support of our local decision makers has been very encouraging in our efforts to create a generation of tobacco-free youth.”

“We all stand to benefit when we recognize that health and well-being is everyone’s business. Healthy weight, which is linked to prevention of many chronic health conditions, was the basis for establishing the Healthy Sarasota County Collaborative. We are a group of stakeholders actively engaged in improving the health and well-being of our residents where they live, work, learn and play by continuing to make significant inroads into child care centers, schools, worksites and primary care clinics,” says Healthy Sarasota Collaborative Co-Chair Dan Washmuth who also serves as the Nutrition Educator in the Food & Nutrition Services Department for Sarasota County Schools. “Achieving the vision of a healthy community can only come about when we work collaboratively.”



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Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities.  
View the complete policy at [www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx)

DOH-Sarasota is part of the department’s network of local health departments that work to protect, promote and improve the health of all people through integrated state, county and community efforts. For statewide updates, follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health, please visit [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov).



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For more information: visit [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).

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